Dear George, 5/20/91

I'm sorry I just forgot to mail this so it is a day late. My own lateness prompts me to mention a few things about book publishing, with which I've had some experience. Some of these involve decisions to be made.

I hope you won't mind my suggesting that speed in the writing is necessary to speed in the appearance and that the latter is important. I hope you will consider asking Bradlee for the time now and not wait until there is agreement with a publisher. There is no doubt in my mind that it is an eminently publishable book whose prospects are enhanced by the speed with which it appears.

Ordinarily hardback publishers used to take six month from the time they got the ms until the time the book appeared. If it is to be an original hardback and any publisher sticks to that it will appear too late for maximum impact and importance. But it does not have to take six months for the book to be edited and manufactured. It also does not have to require the usual lead time for reviews although ordinarily that does help the average book. (This book will sell on topicality and news value to which Stone is lustily contributing so much.)

Paperbacks can appear much faster and generally do. But often the income from a paperback is greatly enhanced by the success of the hardback. A "quality" paperback can be produced rapidly if the publisher wants that and arranges it with the printer, who often has work scheduled long in advance. It was a month before Post Mortem could be printed, after it was ready for printing, and the complete printing operation was a matter of a couple of hours only.

Among the things that take time at the publishers are editing and indexing and lawyers.

If you'd like we can talk about my experiences with these things.

But I write before making the package so I won't forget to mail it in the morning to ~~call what~~ because I believe there is an urgent need for speed for the best prospects for the book and to suggest that you ask Ben for the time. I am certain there will be no problem with getting a publisher for it and I am also certain that one determined to make as much of a success of the book as he can will not have to be told how important speed of appearance is.

The purpose of the short summary is not to go into all the book will say but to give a prospective publisher an idea of what it will be, enough of an idea so he can decide whether or not he is interested. The size of the advance reflects the amount of effort he anticipates making among other things. And for all of these things an agent is important. A good agent is worth the money and takes much off the author, which lets him concentrate on the book and not worry about the other details.

There may well be more that you want from my files. I have I think a complete set of the New Orleans papers' clippings on Garrison and the trial but I do not anticipate that the trial will interest you. Nor that all the many things that he said. However, I raise

this because I have a student available to do the searching and the copying because I have not been able to get work ready for her to do for me on the King book.

If you want suggestions on content please let me know, or if you want to talk about that. I have thought of it some but not as much as it should be considered.

I do believe it can be (and probably should be) a relatively short book of limited focus and to a degree we have discussed that.

There are merits for a short book if you'd like to know. One is that they sell better. My own belief is that the author should make his decision based on what he wants to say, not how long or short the book. and that, as you know, I've left entirely up to you.

Of course, the shorter the book the shorter the editing time and the fewer matters there are to concern lawyers. This is also to say that the shorter the book the sooner it can appear.

Where I refer above to limited focus, you asked me about that some time ago and after we spoke I made a few notes. I'll go over them and if we have not discussed them I'll type them. We did not get to discussing that when you were here.

I've forgotten much of Garrison's book but if you have any questions please ask. Including not being able to read my writing.

I spoke to my source of the script yesterday. He has no lead on the shooting script. He also will be away from LA for a couple of weeks.

I have not heard from Livingstone but I have a feeling that I'll be able to get it from him in time. I think the prospects would be better if I could tell him why. He is paranoid about the Stone movie.

I heard from Steve Hagar at High Times again today. You were wise to refuse to talk to him. High Times is a drug publication from what I've been told and he is still struggling with his article without the slightest concept of what is and is not fact and as best I can determine he does not care. He believes all the nutty stuff he has heard is fact and that anyone who disagrees is working for the conspirators, meaning the CIA. He appears to be high on Stone and Garrison, using Stones words about Garrison.

Best,

Jack